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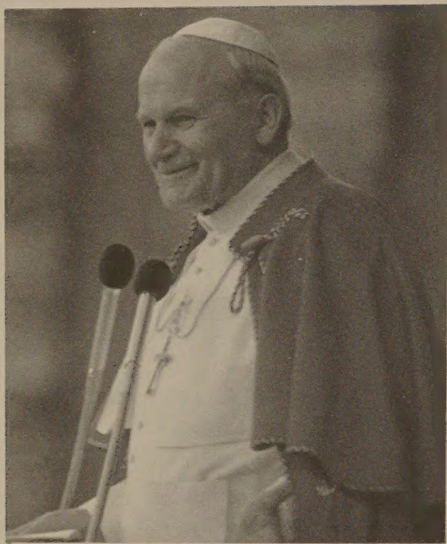
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"ONLY ONE PEACE"



His Holiness Pope John Paul II chose as the theme for the 19th World Day of Peace: "Peace is a value with no frontiers", with the slogan: "North-South, East-West: only one peace."

With this theme the Pope wished to emphasize the universal nature of peace and, at the same time, to stimulate reflection on the relationship existing between the commitment to peace and the commitment to social justice.

This theme has been dealt with in the past and now the Pope proposes that this question should be looked at in greater depth, by reflecting on how the search for just solutions to the existing inequalities between North and South can contribute to the easing of tensions between East and West, and how dialogue and agreement between East and West can lead to greater possibilities of development and the placing of more ample resources at the



service of the peoples of the Third World. His concern is that the world of today should be united in the search for a genuine peace, to be built up in truth, justice and sincere love for every human being and for all peoples, without discrimination.

The Church particularly wishes to stress the fundamental place that must be given to the person, considered in all the dimensions of his or her existence and vocation, and thus the centrality and universality of the spiritual, ethical and cultural values which are the basis of the person's dignity, rights and aspirations.

The attitudes and virtues which favor genuine development, justice and peace must therefore be encouraged: solidarity and universal fraternity, mutual collaboration and respect, interdependence, self-reliance. On the other hand dialogue, the defence and promotion of human rights, and a willingness to build the political and juridical structures of a global peace must all be fostered.

This goal is at the heart of the International Year of Peace, declared by the United Nations for 1986, inaugurated on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Organization's foundation.

The following are excerpts from Pope John Paul II's talk.

Peace as a universal value

At the beginning of the New Year, taking my inspiration from Christ, the Prince of Peace, I renew my commitment and that of the whole Catholic Church to the cause of peace. At the same time I extend to every individual and to all peoples of the earth my earnest greeting and my good wishes: Peace to all of you! Peace to all hearts! Peace is a value of such importance that it must be proclaimed anew and promoted by all. There is no human being who does not benefit from peace. There is no human heart that is not uplifted when peace prevails. All the nations of the world can fully realize their interlinked destinies only if, together, they pursue peace as a universal value.

On the occasion of this 19th World Day of Peace, in the International Year of Peace proclaimed by the United Nations Organization, I offer to everyone as a message of hope my profound conviction: "Peace is a value with no frontiers." *It is a value that responds to the hopes and aspirations of all people and all nations, of young and old, and of all men and women of good will. This is what I proclaim to everyone, and especially to the leaders of the world.*

The question of peace as a universal value needs to be faced with extreme intellectual honesty, sincerity of spirit and an acute sense of responsibility to oneself and to the nations of the earth. I would ask those

responsible for political decisions affecting the relationships between North and South, between East and West, to be convinced that there can be *only one peace*. Those upon whom the future of the world depends, regardless of their political philosophy, economic system or religious commitment, are all called to help construct a single peace on the basis of social justice and the dignity and rights of every human person.

This task requires a radical openness to all humanity and a conviction of the interrelatedness of all the nations of the world. This interrelatedness is expressed in an interdependence that can prove either profoundly advantageous or profoundly destructive. Hence, worldwide solidarity and cooperation constitute ethical imperatives that appeal to the consciences of individuals and to the responsibilities of all nations. And it is *in this context of ethical imperatives* that I address the whole world, proclaiming the universal value of peace.

Threats to peace

In putting forward this vision of peace at the dawn of a new year we are deeply aware that in the present situation peace is also a value that rests on foundations that are very fragile. At first glance our goal to make peace an absolute imperative may seem to be utopian, since our world gives such ample evidence of excessive ➤

self-interest in the context of opposed political, ideological and economic groups. Caught in the grip of these systems, leaders and various groups are led to pursue their particular aims and their ambitions of power, progress and wealth, without taking sufficiently into account the necessity and duty of international solidarity and cooperation for the benefit of the common good of all peoples who make up the human family.

In this situation blocs are formed and maintained which divide and oppose peoples, groups and individuals, making peace precarious and setting up grave obstacles to development. Positions harden and the excessive desire to maintain one's advantage or to increase one's share often becomes the overriding rationale for action. This leads to exploitation of others and the spiral grows towards a polarization that feeds on the fruits of self-interest and the increasing mistrust of others. In such a situation, *it is the small and the weak, the poor and the voiceless who suffer most...* The examples are sadly too numerous today.

The spectre of nuclear weapons, which has its origin precisely in the opposition of East and West, remains the most dramatic and compelling example of this. Nuclear weapons are so powerful in their destructive capacities, and nuclear strategies are so inclusive in their designs, that the popular imagination is often paralyzed by fear. This fear is not groundless....

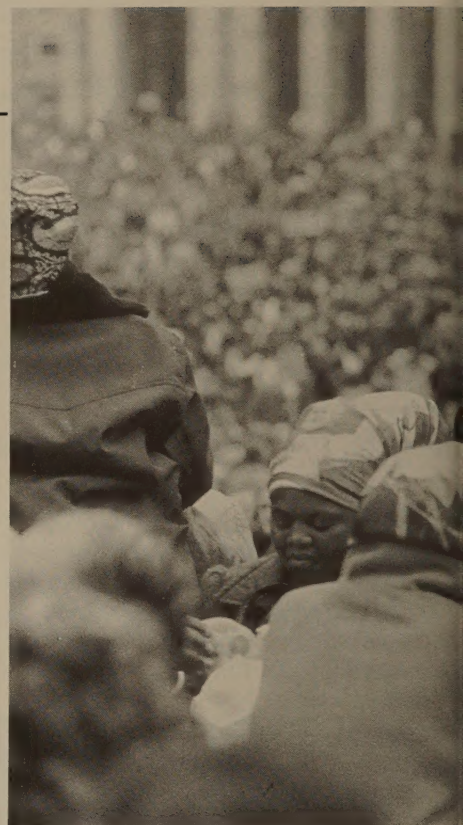
Armed conflict is not the only way that the poor bear an unjust share of the burden of today's world. The developing countries must face formidable challenges even when free of such a scourge. In its many dimensions, *underdevelopment remains an ever growing threat to world peace.*

In fact, between the countries which form the "North bloc" and those of the "South bloc" *there is a social and economic abyss that separates rich from poor....*

In this situation peace as a universal value is in great danger. Even if there is no actual armed conflict as such, where *injustice* exists, it is in fact a cause and potential factor of conflict. In any case a situation of peace in the full sense of its value cannot coexist with injustice. Peace cannot be reduced to the mere absence of conflict; it is the tranquillity and completeness of order.

The deepest roots of the opposition and tensions that mutilate peace and development are to be found in the heart of man. It is above all the heart and the attitudes of people that must be changed, and this needs a renewal, a conversion of individuals.

If we study the evolution of society in recent years we can see, not only deep wounds, but also signs of a determination on the part of many of our contemporaries and of peoples to overcome the present obstacles in order to bring into being a new international system. This is the path that humanity must take if it is to enter into an age



of universal peace and integral development.

The path of solidarity and dialogue

Any new international system... must be based on the personal commitment of everyone to make the basic and primary needs of humanity the first imperative of international policy. Today countless human beings in all parts of the world have acquired a vivid sense of their fundamental equality, their human dignity and their inalienable rights. At the same time there is a growing awareness that humanity has a profound unity of interests, vocation and destiny, and that all peoples, in the variety and richness of their different national characteristics, are called to form a single family. Added to this is the realization that



"The path of dialogue is a path of discoveries, and the more we discover one another, the more we can replace the tensions of the past with bonds of peace."

resources are not unlimited and that needs are immense. Therefore, rather than waste resources or devote them to deadly weapons of destruction it is necessary to use them above all to satisfy *the primary and basic needs of humanity...*

The right path to a world community in which justice and peace will reign without frontiers among all peoples and on all continents *is the path of solidarity, dialogue and universal brotherhood*. This is the only path possible....

It is clear that, in order effectively to achieve a world community of this kind, mental outlooks and political views contaminated by the lust for power, by ideologies, by the defence of one's own privilege and wealth must be abandoned, and replaced by *an openness to sharing and collaboration with all in a spirit of mutual trust*.

That call to recognize the unity of the human family has very real repercussions for our life and for our commitment to peace. It means first of all that we reject the kind of thinking that divides and exploits. It means that we commit ourselves to a new solidarity, the solidarity of the human family. It means looking at the North-South tensions and replacing them with a new relationship, the social solidarity of all....

...Dialogue is a means by which people discover one another and discover the good hopes and peaceful aspirations that too often lie hidden in their hearts. True dialogue goes beyond ideologies, and people meet in the reality of their human lives. Dialogue breaks down preconceived notions and artificial barriers. Dialogue brings human beings into contact with one another as members of one

human family, with all the richness of their various cultures and histories. A conversion of heart commits people to promoting universal brotherhood; dialogue helps to effect this goal....

...The path of dialogue is a path of discoveries, and the more we discover one another, the more we can replace the tensions of the past with bonds of peace.

New relationships built on solidarity and dialogue

In the spirit of solidarity and with the instruments of dialogue we will learn:

- respect for every human person;
- respect for the true values and cultures of others;
- respect for the legitimate autonomy and self-determination of others;
- to look beyond ourselves in ►

order to understand and support the good of others;
 —to contribute our own resources in social solidarity for the development and growth that come from equity and justice;
 —to build the structures that will ensure that social solidarity and dialogue are permanent features of the world we live in....

The Christian vision and commitment

My brothers and sisters in the Christian faith find in Jesus Christ, in the Gospel message and in the life of the Church lofty reasons and *even more inspiring motives for striving to bring about one single peace in today's world*. The Christian faith has as its focus Jesus Christ, who stretches out his arms on the Cross in order to unite the children of God who were scattered (Jn 11:52), to break down the walls of division (Eph 2:14), and to reconcile the peoples in fraternity and peace. The Cross raised above the world symbolically embraces and has the power to reconcile North and South, East and West.

Christians, enlightened by faith know that the ultimate reason why the world is the scene of divisions, tensions, rivalries, blocs and unjust inequalities, instead of being a place of genuine fraternity, is sin, that is to say human moral disorder. But Christians also know that the grace of Christ, which can transform this human condition, is continually being offered to the world, since "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom 5:20). *The Church*, which carries on Christ's work and dispenses his

redeeming grace, *has precisely as her purpose the reconciling of all individuals and peoples in unity, fraternity and peace*. "The promotion of unity," says the Second Vatican Council, "belongs to the innermost nature of the Church, since she is 'by her relationship with Christ, both a sacramental sign and an instrument of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind'." The Church which is one and universal in the variety of the peoples that she brings together, "can form a very close unifying effect on the various communities of individuals and nations, provided they have trust in the Church and guarantee her true freedom to carry out her mission."²

This vision and these demands which arise from the very heart of faith, should above all cause all Christians to become more aware of situations that are out of harmony with the Gospel, in order to purify and rectify them. At the same time Christians should recognize and value the positive signs attesting that efforts are being made to remedy these situations, efforts which they must effectively support, sustain and strengthen....

International Year of Peace and final appeal

Dear friends, brothers and sisters all: at the beginning of a new year I renew my appeal to all of you to put aside hostilities, to break the fetters of the tensions that exist in the world. I appeal to you to turn those tensions of North and South, East and West into new relationships of social solidarity

and dialogue. The United Nations Organization has proclaimed 1986 the International Year of Peace. This noble effort deserves our encouragement and support. What better way could there be to further the aims of the Year of Peace than to make the relationships of North-South and East-West the basis of a peace that is universal!

To you, politicians and statesmen, I appeal: to give the leadership that will incite people to renewed effort in this direction.

To you, businessmen, to you who are responsible for financial and commercial organizations, I appeal: to examine anew your responsibilities towards all your brothers and sisters.

To you, military strategists, officers, scientists and technologists, I appeal: to use your expertise in ways that promote dialogue and understanding.

To you, the suffering, the handicapped, those who are physically limited, I appeal: to offer your prayers and your lives in order to break down the barriers that divide the world.

To all of you who believe in God I appeal that you live your lives in the awareness of being one family under the fatherhood of God.

To all of you and to each one of you, young and old, weak and powerful, I appeal: embrace peace as the great unifying value of your lives. Wherever you live on this planet I earnestly exhort you to pursue in solidarity and sincere dialogue:

Peace as a value with no frontiers: North-South, East-West, everywhere one people united in only one Peace.

1) *Gaudium et Spes*, 42; 2) *ibid*.



HEART IS READY AND FREE

In order to give God the first place in our life we must be detached from other persons. At the same time we know that Scripture invites us to love our neighbor with a "heart of flesh."¹ It seems to us that one concept is in contrast to the other, or is it?

Youth from Florence

We certainly must love our neighbors with a "heart of flesh", but this doesn't mean to love them just in a sentimental way, or only with words. We must love them with all our being which means with our heart as well. This helps us to make ourselves one with our neighbors, sharing with them their joys and their sufferings, to make ourselves one with them in everything except sin.

Someone might object that Christians love their neighbor only in order to love God, that they are taking advantage of their neighbor. Our love for our neighbor is certainly motivated by our desire to fulfill God's commandment, to do his will, but once we have rectified our intention we must set about loving our neighbor as we would want to be loved. This demands sacrifice on our part, the mortification of our ego, or better, it means that we must be ready to give even our life for the other.

It is precisely in loving in this way, with a love that is based on the cross, that an always deeper, fuller, warmer and purer love is born in our hearts.

Our love for our neighbor, in fact, must be pure. The choice of God in our life calls for us to be detached from others. How can we love and at the same time be detached?

From the beginning of our spiritual experience we learned to free our hearts, in each present moment, from any remainder of affection or attachment to any individual in order to have our hearts ready and free to be able to "make ourselves one" with the next neighbor we met. We tried in fact to love Jesus in each person, remembering that he would consider as done to himself whatever we did for any neighbor.

Doing this we learned to live true chastity, something that God asks of each of us every day since it is not just a virtue to be lived when we find ourselves struggling against temptation.

Chiara Lubich

1) Cf. Ez. 11:19.

BUILDING UNITY THROUGH OUR WORK

By ANTONIO MARIA BAGGIO

*By our daily work we extend throughout creation
the relationship of unity that links us to God.*

In six days God created all things, scripture tells us. They were good, and beautiful, and in their proper place. God created through his Word. The book of Genesis introduces each day's work using the words, "God said..." five times.

On the sixth day, however, everything changed. God said: "Let us make..." This one was not going to be a work like the others. The Fathers of the Church regarded this plural form as a reference to the Trinity. Others maintain that this plural form emphasizes God's majesty, and the importance of what he is about to do. The phrase in itself suggests that the Creator paused in his work, almost as if to reflect, to plan. "Let us make..." in this case seems to express a decision made after having carefully thought it over. The words which follow explain the reason for the reflection—if we may use these words—that the sacred author attributes to God, the Creator. The man whom God thought of creating is a being made in his "image and likeness," two words that express similarity like that of a father and son, but also an inner similarity, a closeness of heart. Practically speaking, God had not as yet created anything so similar to himself without it being God. The human being is a person.

What follows in Genesis also helps us to understand why this last action was of such importance—this person will dominate over the rest of the created world. In order to do this he would have to be very similar to God.





Left: After the fall, domination of one group over another was multiplied also through work which became necessary and fatiguing. To escape work the more powerful forced the others, reduced to slaves, to work for them. Social injustice multiplied the poor and unfortunate.

"God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them."¹

The human species was created male and female. Even the unity of these two distinct persons expresses their being created in the image of God. This unity reveals the harmonious relationship existing in all of creation. According to the biblical text, for example, all creatures nourish themselves with vegetable growth. There is no suffering, no death in creation. The absence of physical illness or pain affirms the absence of moral evils and the existence of a profound unity, well ordered during the seven days of creation culminating in the unity of the human person (male and female) and with God.

Through his activity in the created world the person sees that this divine relationship of unity among all creation multiplies and spreads.

Man, however, does not stop at simply working "for" God. The other, older account of creation sheds further light on this event. After having formed man out of the clay of the ground, God made every kind of creature similarly, submitting them to man so that he would give them a name. If we consider the cultural context surrounding the story we note that giving something its name means entrusting it with its task, expressing its meaning. Man established in this way his dominion over creation, he brings to completion what God had done, that is, he collaborated with God. Man's work, to work *with* God, is his ►

activity in the widest and highest sense of the word.

This means that the activity with which a person enters into a relationship with other persons and with the created world, even though it is a fundamental characteristic, is not everything. Work alone neither defines nor explains who man is. It is the relationship with God that defines the human being. The individual is greater than what he or she does because of the resemblance to God. For the Israelite, keeping holy the sabbath, that is, suspending all activities and dedicating oneself with the family, to God, exists in order to remind man of his original superiority, his inherent freedom in the face of any task or any constricting bond.

Unity is broken

They met every day; it was practically a regular appointment. God took walks in the garden and would meet the man and woman there. Then, after having eaten the forbidden fruit, the man recognized God's familiar footsteps and hid because he was naked. *"Who told you that you were naked?"* The Lord asked. The man's answer gives us an idea of the gravity of the situation. It wasn't my fault, the man says, it was the woman *"whom you put here with me."* Almost as if to say if she had not existed, he would not have disobeyed. With these words, man distances himself from the woman and humiliates her. On the other hand, *since* he broke the intimacy with God, man could not keep the intimacy

with the woman; the second, in fact, depended on the first.

Then, when man accuses the serpent, the circle is closed; the bonds of unity are broken in all of creation. God's "curse" adds nothing to what has already happened but it emphasizes the consequences: the earth will no longer easily produce, and man will have to labor and "sweat" in order to survive. There is no "winner" in this situation, however, because while the earth will be subjugated by man's work it is also true that

man will eventually return to the earth.

The woman, who before sin had enjoyed the same dignity as man, now becomes subject to him: *"Your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall be your master."*¹²

Throughout history the domination of one human group over another would reappear in a thousand forms. In fact work becomes a struggle against the earth, reproducing in creation the division that separates man





Joseph Sievers

Left: Mount Tabor, Israel. The Israelites had to often fight for this land, "the promised land." Over the centuries and through the humiliation of the whole nation before their conquerors, and because of the poverty they suffered, the word 'poverty' acquired a spiritual meaning for the chosen people. The poor, chosen by God, became the inheritors of the Lord's promises.

who cultivates his land without reaping its fruit³ or the servant who works for someone else and cannot therefore enjoy the harvest of his labor. The figure of the servant becomes, in fact, the image of the human condition insofar as the servant labors at a job for which he may or may not be compensated.

The original plan of God however is not lost. A positive judgement on human existence and work remains fundamental. In hebrew, for example, there is a word *avoda* which indicates either work or religious worship and confers on work a special sacred sense; it speaks of activity which "tends to free man from the burden of nature."

The term "work"—after original sin—signifies the twofold nature of human activity: positive, if man works for the unity of creation, maintaining the order established by God; negative, if he works to affirm his own value above other values.

This twofold aspect clearly emerges from the events of the direct descendents of Cain. The sons of Lamech belong to Cain's offspring and they embody the riches that come from work, and the different areas of work. They are the shepherd Jabal, "*the ancestor of all who dwell in tents and keep cattle*," the artist, Jubal, "*the ancestor of all who play the lyre and the*

pipe," Tubalcain, "*The ancestor of all who forge instruments of bronze and iron*." Here, however, we are dealing with a material power which has been won with blind pride leading Lamech to say: "*I have killed a man for wounding me, a boy for bruising me*."⁴

This arrogance will all be swept away by the flood.

Rich and poor

The fact that work can result in either, wealth or poverty is a consequence of sin. In order to go ahead with our close-up look at work we should stop to consider the poor and their meaning in the Old Testament. The social reality of Israel underwent frequent changes which were accompanied by an evolution of religious sensitivity.

After the flight from Egypt and the entrance into the promised land a first period began where the Israelites settled down in one place. During this time social differences were not as marked: possessions were linked to the land which had recently been divided among the families. In the Old Testament, at any rate, wealth was a sign of God's blessing for these whom he loves. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob became wealthy because they were men of God.

This divine favor that the "just" enjoyed was accom-

from woman and from God. Work is fatiguing. It is a necessity: to avoid it the stronger will force the weaker to work for them.

This sense of defeat will always accompany human activity. The hebrew language does not have a technical word for work that corresponds to the modern idea we have of it. It uses words which indicate fatigue or effort which often is not rewarded by results. In the Old Testament we often come across the example of a man



Above: *Shepherding is an ancient occupation. It is one of the principal activities to which the descendants of Cain dedicated themselves. Notwithstanding the fall, work kept a sacred character, and through work mankind is able to develop its potential.*

panied by Jahweh's favor upon his entire people, whom he nourished in the desert⁵ and led into the promised land. The milk and honey that flowed there indicate a material abundance associated with a fullness of spiritual life on which the abundance depended.

On the contrary, according to the book of Proverbs poverty is nothing other than a consequence of laziness and if poverty suddenly befalls a person it is because he harbors evil in his heart.⁶

The social homogeneity of the oldest period did not however last long. With the consolidation of the monarchy, a category of royal functionaries developed which never before existed. They were people who had become wealthy through their work and by the favor bestowed on them by the king. Naturally there were those who worked very hard: families who, generation after generation, had

multiplied their wealth. But there were also people who took and added the fields of their neighbor to their own. The number of the poor multiplied because of these big landowners, corrupt judges, and various types of tyrannical persons.

Sacred Scripture, on the hand, frequently and in many ways reveals concern for the precarious financial situation of the poor, whether they be wage earners, widows, orphans, slaves or foreigners. Great riches were considered unjust because they made people forget the Alliance with God. The Lord through the prophet Josea said: *"They ate their fill; when filled, they became proud of heart and forgot me."*⁷ The country is full with silver and gold, Isaiah recounts, and the people make idols of them, falling into the error of old, adorning the work of their hands.

The prophets rose up against those who thought they could do without God. A person like that often became the persecutor of their equals and, in time, enemy to God and the poor. These poor were taken advantage of, persecuted, humiliated and became part of those poor who turned to God to obtain justice and consolation.

In the Psalms which are a loud-speaker for all the sufferings of the lowly, the poor become the friends of God who attract his blessing. When the poor seek the Lord, he answers; when the afflicted call out, the Lord hears.⁸ The lowly and the just are placed on the same level,⁹ The lowly are identified with the whole people of Israel¹⁰

and the promises of the Lord are made to the poor and they become the heirs of the Alliance between God and his people. As we can see the favor of God is no longer manifested only in material abundance by which he rewards the just; but also in the promises of consolation and justice through which he answers the poor.

It is a spiritual evolution of great importance which takes place within the religion of the Israelites.

"From the book of Zephaniah onward"—Pasquale Foresi explains in his research on the subject¹¹— "poverty also has the meaning of humility, and the word 'poor' often came to be translated as 'humble' or lowly. In fact, through the collective experience of defeat, of humiliation of the nation in front of the victors, and because of material misery, poverty tended to acquire a moral, spiritual, and eschatological meaning for the chosen people:"

*Seek the Lord, all you humble of the earth, who have observed his law;
Seek justice, seek humility;
perhaps you may be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger.*¹²

Slowly then the idea developed that from the lowly and the humble the salvation of Israel will come. □

1) Genesis 1:27; 2) Genesis 3:16; 3) Isaiah 65:21; 4) Genesis 4:23; 5) Exodus 16:8-5; 6) Proverbs 6:12-15; 7) Hosea 13:6; 8) Psalm 34:5-7; 9) Psalm 139:13-14; 10) Psalm 149:4; 11) Pasquale Foresi "Spunti per una meditazione sull'umiltà," Rocca di Papa, February 18, 1982; 12) Zephaniah 2:3.

Choosing other alternatives

Education

It was Monday morning and everybody was moving slowly. The first warning bell rang and I noted only two students seated in the classroom. They were there, but definitely not awake. I, too, was not ready, trying to gather materials from the four different classrooms where I teach. The tardy bell rang and a pack of students glided in as it stopped ringing. A lot of people were still milling around in the hallway but above the general hubbub, I heard Mrs. Sullivan's voice rise and end in a tremor. When I stepped outside I heard somebody yell but I couldn't see who. Just then, a man yelled again, loud and to the point, with a threat. Everybody froze. Then over everybody's heads I could see a big student, his face contorted. In the same second, it seemed that everyone melted into classrooms, leaving the big boy and his enemy alone in the hallway, echoing with threats.

I moved closer to the big boy, remembering that the lady teachers had just resolved to let the men teachers handle all fights, but that month the word of life was: "May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love

one another and the whole human race." It had been such an intense month of trying to live this sentence that now this incident seemed just another practical application of it. I took the big student's hand to try and turn him around. Then I looked up and it seemed as though I were looking up the edge of a pyramid. Up close he was enormous. "This is ridiculous," I thought. "I'll never be able to stop him." In fact he looked around to see what was annoying him and merely tossed his hand aside. I was chilled though, by his eyes. I wanted to quit right there, but the fact that I wanted to love was stronger; it ruled everything else out.

Since I clearly could not make him falter, I stepped around him to the other boy just as the big one hauled off and kicked him, hard and mean. The second one recovered his balance and slowly pivoted, his eyes like ice, glinting. I slipped in between them to catch his gaze and said the only thing I could think of: "It takes real guts to walk away from a fight." I couldn't tell whether anything I was saying was registering in his brain, so I said it

again: "It takes real guts to walk away from a fight."

Slowly, with granite weight to his movements, he turned, and walked away. He didn't look back, but just kept walking in stride down the corridor away from the fight. I was too scared *not* to look back. The big boy had been intercepted by a male teacher who stood blocking his path, shouting up at him. The second boy stopped and leaned up against a locker. Tears welled up in his eyes as he said: "That's the first time I ever walked away from a fight."

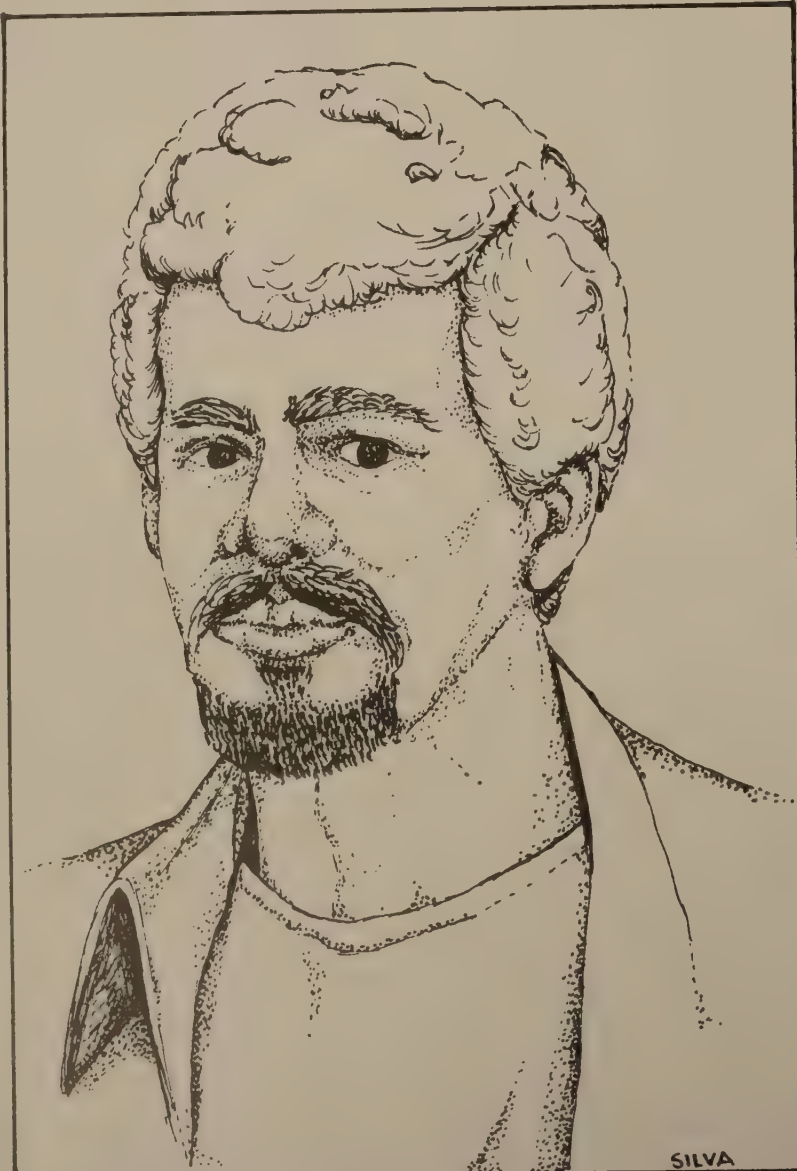
Later I received a note from him which read: "Please don't think I'm just a no good punk that roams the street till all hours of the night. To tell the truth, I really respect you for not only stopping me from fighting, but for the support you gave me...I think I can walk away from any fight from now on. You have shown me that I can still have my self-respect. Thanks."

At a later date, the big boy also conceded that there might be other alternatives than fighting to resolve problems and he was interested in finding out what they were.

A.N.

A HEART THAT STILL BEATS

By ORESTE PALIOTTI



Just a few hours were enough to make known all over Brazil not a soccer player or famous singer but an obscure post office clerk of Ourinhos, Brazil, a small city west of San Paolo. Joao Carlos Vieira, 22 years of age, died on Friday, September 13th in a motorbike accident. Thus far, there is nothing extraordinary: a news story like many others. Why is it then that the major newspapers and one of the most popular TV shows—with over 50 million viewers—gave him so much importance?

It was due to the fact that the family of the youth authorized that his heart, kidneys and corneas be used for transplants. It was the first time, from a city outside the capital, that one person donated so many vital organs, giving back life and hope to as many as five persons. In fact, Joao's heart would continue to beat in a bricklayer from near San Paolo, his kidneys would allow two other people to survive; while thanks to the corneas, two women, from towns near his, would recover their sight—one after over 20 years!

After his death, a characteristic of Joao's life continued: that of being a person who made of himself a gift to others, who put himself at everyone's service. Certainly, he would never have imagined or sought all the publicity; he was too unassuming for that, too busy living out in the present this marvelous adventure.

Dusk had quickly turned to night and Joao's long, intense day was also drawing to an end. Tired but happy, moments of his day passed through his mind as his motorbike quickly sped toward the outskirts of Ourinhos.

Since a four month training course was over, he would have two days off including Sunday before going back to work at the post office. He wasn't going to return as a clerk this time, but as a supervisor. Two days off seemed like manna in the desert to him. Ahead of him lay the preparations for a musical workshop in San Paolo on the weekend. It would be a great opportunity, he thought, to share the ideal of his life with others of his age and foster deeper relationships among them—spark new life into a seemingly dead world.

Among those invited, in fact, were colleagues from work, friends from the neighborhood—young people who knew and liked what the Gen' stood for—and young people who had been attracted by the fascination of the Gospel—as he had been five years ago—but for one reason or another had lost contact with the Gen. He was probably thinking particularly of them when, days before, he had returned from that training course in Porto Alegre and had confided to a friend as he passed through the city of San Paolo: "I am going to give my life for my people."

This tells us something about the attitude with which Joao

returned to Ourinhos. For this reason his family saw little of him during those days back home; they missed him and would rather not have had to share his time with so many others. He was continually going off on his motorbike to look up friends, when it wasn't they who came looking for him. He even went to the place where he used to work to say hello to his colleagues and, as if that wasn't enough, he went back at closing time to give several of them a ride home, making several trips back and forth. There was so much to talk about after being away for four months!

He didn't have an easy time of it, trying to convince his friends, and smooth out the obstacles so that they could attend the workshop. It involved, among other things, the inconvenience of a seven to eight hour bus trip from Ourinhos to the city of San Paolo. But Joao's enthusiasm was contagious and many in the end said 'yes' to going. Finally after having said goodbye to the last one and taking care of a few errands, he took off for his last appointment of the day.

Joao had many friends and in the most varied environments not only at work and in the neighborhood but also among people generally rejected by society. For example there was a group of prisoners that he regularly visited every month. But that wasn't all. He realized that he would always return back home a free person and

yet they were not free. Do you know then what came to his mind? He decided to look into the possibility of spending a period of time in prison. He had already submitted this request and was eagerly awaiting the reply.

Let's hear what others say about him. The figure portrayed is that of an enthusiastic young man who was not seemingly different from others his age. However if he was not in a group, his absence was immediately felt—he was the friend that everyone was glad to have.

William, a Gen, recounts: "We met several years ago during a soccer game and right from the start we hit it off. I can't explain it but just by being with him I felt I knew what I should do. He was a person who acted with decision. When I was feeling low he helped me resolve my problems even if it meant staying up late."

Another friend cut in: "For Joao, distance or time didn't matter; he was always there when you needed him." His boss agreed: "It wasn't unusual for Joao to help out with odd jobs and errands, even after work. I remember that when I needed to re-paint my house he offered to help. During the day we painted and then he would leave to work the night shift at the post office." A colleague added: "When the lines of people standing at the post office window would get long, he

(Continued on page 28)

AN AUTHENTIC LOVE



Question: We would like to do something about the injustice we see around us. All our efforts, however, whether on an individual or group level, appear to be very limited because we never make it to reach everyone as we would like. What should we be doing?

A group of young people
from Brazil

Answer: In order to resolve the various forms of injustice that torment our world, we cannot limit ourselves to our own projects. We must work on the social, economic and political structures as well.

We can never forget that the existing structures have their roots in the hearts and minds of the persons who created them. If peoples' hearts and minds are open to the love Jesus brought on earth, if they are aflame with

the desire of building a more united world, then the new structures that they create will naturally be all permeated with love, and will intelligently foster world unity. If we want to work on the structures, then we must first of all, but not exclusively, work with the people who create them.

How can we bring about new structures when the old ones which limit our efforts to improve the situation are maintained by organized social, economic and political selfishness—either on an individual or collective level—and remain closed to the demands of universal love? It seems to us that one way could be this: to create new structures and practices, like the communion of goods for example; our groups may be constant catalysts of new ideas. They may start out on a small scale, but we needn't worry about the disproportion that could exist between our efforts and the immense problems we face. We are convinced that these new structures will be very powerful because example and conviction always are; through these, it is God who motivates our actions. Through these structures, he will respond to the needs of the world. Just think how small the stable in Bethlehem was in comparison to Caesar's palace.

Even if our projects are small, what matters is that they are true to their original

purpose. In this way, they can always be expanded and adapted as needed. The logic that sustains a project on a world level is no different than the logic that sustains a much smaller project when both are worthwhile.

If Christians remain faithful to their vocation, they can show that the Gospel gives life not only to the human spirit but to all of society, structures as well.

Carlos Claria

Question: I have a friend who doesn't believe in God, but who would like to know him. What would you say to him?

Sai Ling - Hong Kong

Answer: Certainly it would be useful to know your friend personally; but all the same I would encourage him to start loving, that is, loving with an authentic love that is a combination of respect, service and sacrifice; a love that is not measured out sparingly, that does not think of itself, but of the good of others. God lives in the heart of the person who loves. Scripture tells us that the one who loves lives in God, and God in him (cf 1 Jn.4:16). If your friend, even if

he doesn't believe, starts to love, he will experience a joy that perhaps he has never felt before. This joy is a sign of God's presence within him. This is the experience that has opened the way to faith for many.

God is a father, a father to all, and he remains a father even if his children do not recognize him as such. He wants us therefore to love each other and share each

other's joys and sufferings and burdens. He wants us to love everyone without exception, because we are all his children and, as such, brothers and sisters to one another.

Love of neighbor therefore is one sure way to God the Father. Tell your friend this: tell him to try and love, but above all accompany your words with the example of your life.

Marisa Cerini



WORD OF LIFE

**"Man does not live
on bread alone."
(Luke 4:4)**

The word makes us live.

The word makes us free.

*The word
guarantees happiness.*

The word converts.

The word purifies us.

*The word draws us to our
specific vocations.*

*The word brings forth the
hatred of the world and the
sanctity of the disciple.*

*The word makes us see
the truth.*

The word brings comfort.

The word gives us joy.

The word produces works.

The word gives wisdom.

*The word preserves us
from human concerns.*

The word obtains everything.

*The word brings about
union with God.*

*The word gives us hope
of eternal life.*

The word makes us one.

*The word changes one's
mentality.*

*The word makes each soul
a heaven.*

**"Man does not live on bread
alone."**

These words belong to the narration of Jesus' temptations. The scene took place after his baptism on the banks of the river Jordan where he was proclaimed the Son of God and the Holy Spirit descended upon him. Jesus then went into the desert to prepare himself for his public life. During this period of seclusion composed of prayer and fasting, the devil tempted Jesus in his capacity as Son of God and Messiah. In substance, the tempter, who presented himself as "the prince of this world," tried to coax Jesus into asserting himself, by exercising his right, his authority as Son of God, in order to satisfy material needs, to win popular acclaim and possess power.

Instead Jesus answered that he would base his work, his activity on faithfulness to the path carved out by the Father. It doesn't matter if this road would have to pass through opposition, loss of prestige, and failure. It is precisely through absolute faithfulness to the Father that he would reveal himself as the true Son of God.

**"Man does not live on bread
alone."**



Let's now look at the first temptation. Taking his cue from the hunger pangs Jesus was feeling as a result of the wearying fast, the tempter suggested he put his power to perform miracles at the service of this basic need, meaning, that he transform stones into bread to eliminate his hunger today and, naturally in the future, the hunger of the crowds.

At first glance the proposition didn't sound at all strange. After all, what need, what problem is more fundamental than that of hunger? Isn't bread essential to the life and dignity of God's children? Hadn't God promised through his prophets that hunger and misery would no longer exist in the kingdom of the Messiah?

Certainly concern for one's daily bread is more than legitimate. But the grossness and deceit of this temptation



"Man does not live on bread alone."

This word of life puts us on our guard against the strong and ever-lurking temptation to make mankind's happiness depend principally on external conditions and material goods. Above all, today, we can be more easily tempted to think that a more comfortable house, a healthier and more beautiful body, more money available to enjoy ourselves, to travel, etc. would make us happy and solve our problems.

Certainly these things are not to be underrated.

Nonetheless, Jesus continues to repeat to us that they alone are not enough. He continues to proclaim the pre-eminence of the Word of God. We as humans are made for immensely greater things—we are made for God. For this reason, the greater the promise of material well-being—offered us by technical and scientific progress—the stronger our resolve should be to live the words of Jesus, especially the commandment of love of neighbor. Only Jesus' words are able to give meaning and fullness to our lives.

lay in using Jesus' human need for bread to try and deform his relationship with the Father, daring him to manipulate God. This was something totally contrary to the filial disposition of total trust in the Father which Jesus continually sought. At the same time, proposing a miracle of this kind to Jesus, the tempter tried to insinuate that the kingdom of God lies in possessing material goods. And this is outrageous!

Jesus would certainly concern himself with bodily nourishment. In fact, he would soon multiply the loaves of bread to feed the crowds who followed him. Once uplifted by this miracle, however, they wanted to make him king, and so he withdrew from their sight, because he could not accept the confusion of values that their actions implied.

"Man does not live on bread alone."

Jesus will be inflexible on this point. As precious and indispensable as bread may be, by itself it can never be enough. The heart of the human person is made for another "bread," the Word of God, the bread that the Father gave us in the person of Jesus.

Jesus will always refuse to reduce individual freedom to freedom only from material want such as hunger, misery, sickness, death, etc. The freedom that he wants to give us is much deeper. It is freedom from ourselves, meaning freedom from our selfishness, from pride, greed, hatred, rivalry, the thirst for power, pleasure, etc. Therefore it is the joy of loving, of serving, of giving of oneself in order to build a world which is more beautiful and more in accord with the heart of God. For Jesus even freedom from hunger should come as a consequence of this inner freedom.

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

How to win a friend

I work in the business office of a university and have found the college atmosphere always refreshing and challenging. Most of all, I enjoy working with the students and find it easy to relate to them because I, myself, am just a few years out of college.

However, as supervisor of student accounts, there are times I find myself playing "the heavy" by doing my job. This often involves sending out notices on past due bills and posting charges to students' accounts. Another example is my responsibility to deny the check cashing privileges of students who write insufficient checks to the university. Most students caught in this predicament accept the consequences, sometimes grudgingly, but with a new respect for budgeting and balancing.

One busy Monday afternoon, however, I was confronted by an angry student who began his protest by banging his fist on my desk. His rage caught me off guard. I checked the student's account and saw that we had indeed received an insufficient check from him.

I told the young man of the university's policy on insufficient checks. The words he used in reply are not printable. I had never heard such language, and most of the curse words were directed at me.

In that moment I forgot there were other students waiting in line to see me. I lost my patience and my temper, and the instant he finished speaking I answered back, as calmly as possible: "The only other thing I can tell you in this situation is that I do not appreciate your attitude, nor am I paid to be cursed at." With this his language became even worse as he picked up his books and turned to leave. This made me even angrier. I was determined to have the last word. "Why don't you grow up?" I called after him. He turned only to glare at me.

My colleagues all seemed impressed by the "authority" I had voiced in the situation. "You really put him in his place," one said. But I felt miserable inside. What had I really proved? Thinking about it I could see that I was the one who needed to do some growing up.

The word of life we were living that month suddenly offered me hope. "May the Lord be generous in increasing your love, and make you love one another and the whole human race." There was a reason why that particular student had con-

fronted me that day. I had responded to his anger with my own anger and authority. I was applauded by my co-workers for being tough but I certainly hadn't loved him.

The next day I was looking for a way to contact the young man when I caught sight of him down the hall. I wasn't sure how to start, but I walked over to him and asked if I could speak to him. He looked defensive and reluctant, but he agreed. As we stepped into a vacant office I felt inner directed by the word of life. I apologized to the young man for insulting him in front of his peers, for humiliating him. By this point his face had changed completely. At first he looked at me in disbelief and then he became embarrassed. "Well, I'm sorry I swore at you like that. I have to watch my mouth." He smiled and left the room.

Some co-workers had seen us talking and were curious. I simply told them we had apologized to one another, but they found this hard to believe. A week later on another Monday afternoon another student stood in front of my desk protesting a bill he had received. With each sentence his voice got louder. Suddenly another voice rang out over the voices of the other students in line. "Say man, stop giving the little lady a hard time. She's just doing her job." It was the same young

man who only a week before had banged his fist on my desk, only now we were friends.

His comment broke the mood of the other student's anger so

that I was able to help him work out a solution to paying his account.

I could hardly contain the joy I felt. I had experienced what trying to live the Gospel can do and the words of the monthly commentary to that word of life rang true: "Every effort we make to go beyond ourselves and step out to encounter a neighbor, is a step forward in our growth as Christians." And that is all I really want to be.

C.S.

A second chance

I had made arrangements before supper with another sister to meet at a specific time and place, so that in the meantime she could practice the piano and I could do some work in my studio.

It was right after supper and a few of us were in the front room when a sister walked into the room a few feet from me and asked generally, "Would anybody like to go for a walk?" There was a long pause. I was looking at her and I just could

not bring myself to say yes thinking of the work that I had to do. Before I had a chance to respond she said, "Your face says no." In that moment it flashed through my mind that recently I had had very few chances to spend time with this sister and that this was my neighbor to love in the present moment. I responded, "Do you mean that my face would tell you no?" I'll go with you."

As we were walking out sister said, "We can just go one block and come right back." But I replied, "Oh no, I'd love to go farther." And off we went. Not only was it a very enjoyable walk for both of us, but also all the work that I felt needed to be done I discovered was not such a big project after all. In a short period of time everything was done. Great was the sense of joy I had in my heart for this small act of love.

M.F.

"Don't give up"

One of the women with whom I work has a tendency to panic when something goes wrong. She gets so excited that she has a hard time conveying what problem has arisen. One afternoon, she came running in to the computer room and

urgently repeated that there was a problem. I tried to remain very calm to help her calm down, and then said that if she wasn't able to give me more information, I would not be able to determine what we could do. She thought I was making fun of her and she stormed out of the room. This made me a little angry, but the word of life came to mind: "...to love our neighbor as ourselves is worth more than any burnt offering or sacrifice." I stopped what I was doing and went to see if I could help the woman. When I reached her, she told me in a sharp tone that she had already fixed the problem. Later that day she came into the computer room to do some work. She was still angry and the tension made me want to give up. Immediately though, because of the word of life, I tried to think of something of interest to her to talk about. I asked her about her little boy and his sports, and little by little, her frown began to disappear as she told me all about him. About an hour later, out of the clear blue sky, she commented about how hard it is to be a Christian. She went on to say that she was going to have to do some "remodeling" on herself, that she had to learn how to control her anger, and she thanked me for earlier.

L.R.



*"Fan into a flame the gift that God gave you....
God's gift was not a spirit of timidity, but the
Spirit of power, and love, and self-control."*

2 Timothy 1:6-8

AN UNDERCURRENT OF HOPE

By ATTILIO DANESE



Was Francois Mauriac a Catholic novelist or rather—as he preferred to call himself—“a Catholic who writes novels?” This isn’t a play on words but rather it says something about Mauriac’s attitude. He was Catholic but not an apologist or “defender of the faith.” He reached the highest level of literary distinction without falling into the extremes of his time of either the aesthetic or “decadent” schools of style and thought.

Mauriac died fifteen years ago this past October. We recall the man and his work because this year marks the centennial of his birth. He was born in Bordeaux, France on October 11, 1885. His father had died when he was only twenty months old. Francois was raised in an upper middle class environment. Landowners, judges and merchants were among his ancestors. He described them very well in his autobiographical novel *The Frontenac Mystery* in 1933. The protagonist, Blanche Frontenac, represented his mother, a widow with five children who sacrifices her personal happiness for the sake of the family. From his mother Francois received a deep religious sense which also was fostered by the sisters and Marianist brothers who taught him during his school years. He showed himself to be a brilliant student and continued his

studies in literature at the university of his city.

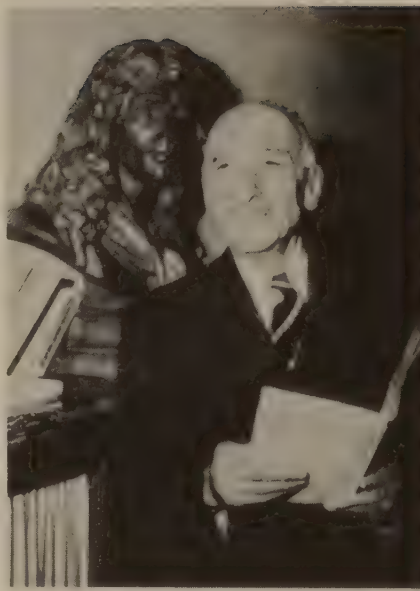
His natural Catholicism was soon after put to the test by “a restless and agonized” conscience.¹ Two events that particularly influenced him were the Dreyfus Affair and the *Sillon*, a democratic and progressive Catholic youth movement founded in France. In the Dreyfus case the Church in France—in Mauriac’s view—sided with the guilty parties and aroused a sense of outrage in him. In his book, *Maltaverne* published in 1969, he wrote “...complicity with the perjurers of the State for the purpose of keeping an innocent man in prison is unforgivable. Yes, it is necessary for the Church to pay to the last cent.”² The democratic ideas and ideals proposed by the *Sillon* fascinated him. As a result he joined “The Young Guard” and left it five years later but not without remaining deeply influenced by it. “I made my political choice at an early age,” he wrote later in his memoirs, “and from the time of the *Sillon* I never doubted again.”³ He then was disillusioned by what he considered the continual betrayal of Christian ideals on the part of members of the French Christian Democratic party.

After receiving his degree he succumbed to the fascination of Paris where he soon sought to pursue his literary career. In ►

1909 he published his first collection of verse *Les Mains Jointes*, 'The Joined Hands' which was reviewed in *The Paris Echo* and from that time on he received recognition as a poet. In 1911 *L'adieu à l'Adolescence* was published.

On his return from his honeymoon he was drafted into military service but was involved in World War I as a noncombatant. Literary success came quickly in the early 20's with *A Kiss for the Leper* in 1922 where he recounts a cruel, though pathetic story of a marriage (Jean Peluee' marries the woman destined for him by his family and by his pastor, but on the wedding night a troubled situation begins which will accompany the couple until their death). His mastery of the French language and the psychological refinement of his analyses revealed Mauriac's talents as a novelist which were soon to be acclaimed and awarded as, for example, by the French Academy in 1933.

In his other celebrated novel *Vipers Tangle* written in 1932 once again through the ups and down of a middle class family he criticized and scrutinized the conformism, the traditional and often superficial Christianity of France of the 1930's which covered over jealousies, greed, and extra-marital entanglements. The old lawyer, the protagonist of the story, recalls all his successes and adventures, at first with sarcasm but then with vengeance when he decides to disinherit his children and grandchildren. The light of grace does come to the



In 1952 François Mauriac received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

old man, opening him up to mercy and forgiveness even if only at the end.

Mauriac arrived at the height of literary acumen in his autobiographical work, *The Frontenac Mystery* where he seemingly tried to repair the graphic representation of human vice portrayed in *Vipers Tangle*.

Mauriac's fascination with Racine's tragedies at this point led him to take up new literary forms. He ventured into playwriting (*Asmodee*, *Les Mal Aimes*, *Passage du Malin*, *Le Feu sur terre*) into essays in literary criticism (*La Vie de Racine*, *Blaise Pascal et Sa Soeur Jacqueline*); and he even took on controversial religious issues in *God and Mammon*, *Souffrances et Bonheur du*

Chretien, and especially in the famous *Life of Jesus*.

Mauriac's journalistic activity should be remembered, as well. Before World War II, he wrote for *L'Echo de Paris*, *Sept*, *Temps Present*, and after the war, primarily for *Le Figaro*.

The high point of his fame came in 1952, the year he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature "for the penetrating analysis of the soul and the artistic intensity with which, through the medium of the novel, he has interpreted human life."⁴ As P.H. Simon acutely commented: "Maurice sought to know life. He deeply probed the human heart and manifested in his works a talent for lyrics, a power, a vibrancy that approaches poetry."⁵ Even though he wrote memorable essays covering many different fields, his greatest achievements, according to many critics, came as a novelist and journalist.

In his novels he was able to blend poetic talent with a penetrating analysis of persons and situations. Mauriac's lyrical descriptions of the scenes where his plots took place, oftentimes reached pictorial inspiration and yet communicated authenticity, as real scenes observed by him. Even when places and events risked being repetitious, Mauriac's excellent blending of internal and external events were able to make persons and situations come alive.

To the initial question of whether he was a Catholic novelist or a Catholic who

wrote novels, he himself answered: "Sin is of necessity the native element of a man of letters; the passions of the heart are the bread and wine that make up his daily nourishment. To depict these objectively without connivance—as Maritain would have it—may be the task of the philosopher and moralist but not the creative writer, whose art consists in making visible, tangible and fragrant a world replete with forbidden pleasures but also with sanctity.... May grace be present in our works. Scorned and seemingly defeated nevertheless this undercurrent of love must not fail to make itself felt by the reader."⁶ His personal link to faith and grace remained important to Mauriac and permitted him to present and describe situations and human emotions without the morbidity of those who indulge themselves in them.⁷ A beautiful testimony of his latter years was: "Whether I was writing of sin or grace I wrote of none other than Christ.... I was never ashamed of him before men from my infancy up to the present."⁸ Elsewhere he recognized his debt to the Catholic faith and said that it is characteristic of the Catholic novelist "from the moment that nothing of what is human repels him or makes him indignant, to write with love for the sinner, to discern the embers of love even below the ashes, to look into the eyes of the poor."⁹

His novels are not even novels about conversions but rather he presents characters who are caught in the struggle between good and evil, between

existence and nothingness, between love and hate, between salvation and eternal damnation. He respected this anguished struggle even when, as in *Therese Desqueyroux* published in 1927, he expressed the wish that the sinner save him or herself. In the preface he had hoped that suffering would lead her to God. His, however, remained only a wish. The protagonist in this case keeps her secret and mystery as to whether or not she ultimately finds God.

In the field of journalism he showed great integrity and faithfulness to the facts, using satire and irony in his defense of truth. Besides bourgeois Christianity he also attacked Christians of the left, which made him look like a conformist, however he did it with the manner of someone who—further along in years—advises youth to have a minimum of patience with history so that progress can be made in the battle on behalf of mankind.

The Spanish Civil War in 1936 aroused his sense of justice and nourished his already polemical nature which quieted down only one month prior to his death. His political associations which went from the Sillon to the Action Française, to the Christian Democrats, served to encourage his political activity in favor of the people living under the yoke of colonialism. However, the many disappointments led him to often seek refuge in his writing until the time when he aligned himself with the political thought of General Charles De Gaulle.

In his novels as well as in journalism, in his poems as well as in his plays, in essays as well as in his memoirs, his interest in, and his defense of the human person, never diminished. At times one could have the impression that his pessimism in describing the human condition made him sound like Sartre, but his Christian vision of humanity always held out a thread of hope and left the individual the chance to save him or herself. Even the *Dark Angels* (1936) can convert at the end and save themselves because in Christ all can find their path to salvation. In showing the many sides to the human comedy he never excluded the last ray of hope so that all those who want, even for a short time, can find a light that will console them.

We can conclude with what P.H. Simon wrote: "Whoever reads Mauriac with attention and understanding—whether believer or unbeliever—will come away with a renewed awareness of an undercurrent of hope and love which lies hidden in even the darkest and least promising of human situations."¹⁰ □

1) F. Mauriac, *Memoire interieurs*, Flammarion, Paris 1959, p. 204; 2) *idem*. Un adolescent d'autrefois, Flammarion, p. 55; 3) *idem*. Nouveaux memoires interieurs, Flammarion, Paris, 1965, p. 243; 4) *cfr.* P. H. Simon, *Mauriac, Ecrivains de toujours*, Le Seuil, Paris, 1982, p. 21; 5) *loc. cit.* p. 22; 6) F. Mauriac, *La litterature et le Peche*, in AA. VV., *L'homme et le Peche*, Plan, Paris, 1938; 7) *cfr.* Ch. Du Bos, *F. Mauriac et le probleme du romancier catholique*, Correa, Paris, 1933; 8) *cfr.* P.H. Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 58; 9) *loc. cit.* p. 61; 10) P.H. Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 91.



One day I was on the playground at McDonald's. A big boy came up and he told his little brother to beat me up. The little brother put his arms around my waist and we both fell down. The little boy was hurt. I tried to help him and asked him if he was all right. I loved Jesus in him and got the hundredfold when his mother asked me if I was all right.

One night my mom said we couldn't read a story. My sister started crying. I said: "Laura, don't cry," and I rubbed her back and I was happy. Then it was the hundredfold because we got to read a story after all.

David
7 years old

My mom asked me to put my crayons away. I was running to my room with them and I bumped into my little brother and he fell on the can that the crayons were in. I stopped and kissed him on the head and he stopped crying. I felt happy because I loved Jesus, too, when I loved my brother.

I helped my mommy by not touching the butterflies when she asked me not to. I like to pet them. But I loved Jesus.

One day my class got ice cream bars for helping with the school carnival. Mommy came with my little sister to get me. We didn't have an ice cream bar for Sarah. At first I did not want to share but then I decided to love. We sat down on the steps and ate the ice cream bar together. I was very happy.

Miriam
— 5 years old

I like to chew gum and blow bubbles but when my mom asks me to keep my gum in my mouth I do it to love her.



The very young and the Gospel

My brother and I both like to sit up front in the car. I gave up sitting in the front and let my brother do it even though it was my turn. I was happy to do it for Jesus in my brother.

One morning my little brother wanted to take my pillow and I gave it to him. And I gave my mom a pillow, too. I loved Jesus in both of them. Then I let my little brother scribble in my sticker book because it made him happy.

Laura
5 years old

We went for a walk. When we got home my mommy sat on the driveway. I got her a lawn chair so she would be more comfortable. I felt happy.





The mother and brother of Joao. After the death of his father, Joao supported the family working in the Post Office. When the mother was interviewed by national TV broadcasters she had this to say about donating Joao's organs: "When we can, we shouldn't pass up an opportunity to do good."

(Continued from page 15)

would always come to the front and help us out." "Yes, he was one of the best workers we had," Laercio, another colleague commented. "He was sensible and trustworthy. It was no surprise that he was made supervisor."

Someone described him as pensive but added, "when you were with him this was not apparent. He conveyed something that filled you with joy."

Another person referred to his brotherly concern saying: "He once pointed out to me that I didn't respect my girlfriend the way I should. Before saying goodbye though, he apologized, thinking perhaps that I was offended. Instead I was grateful to him for having opened my eyes. Joao was a person who lived in order to make others happy."

One appointment still remained though, the most important one. Looking at his watch Joao noticed apprehensively that he had but a few minutes to get to the evening Mass. It was almost dark and the headlight of his motorbike projected a

yellowy stripe which danced on the asphalt. The street lights on the outskirts of Ourinhos seemed to also dance as he drove along. Would he arrive in time? One thing is certain—in no way would he want to miss Mass!

After an entire day in which he tried to find Jesus in every neighbor: happy or sad, likable or not (seeing beyond external appearances); it would be absurd to miss the direct encounter with Him in the Eucharist. Joao in his own small way wanted to give all of himself to others as Jesus did. He gave his time, his attention, his advice, his joy, his energy—all of himself.

Already several years ago he thought of donating his eyes. Similarly, he was always the first to offer when his co-worker's mother needed blood transfusions over an extended period of time. A phrase of Chiara Lubich's² that he always carried on him tells us something significant about Joao: "If the measure of our love is to be ready to give our life for our friend, then we

should be ready for any act of love that may be asked of us."

Crossing the highway was not easy any time of day. There was no car in sight in the oncoming lane. Suddenly out of nowhere a truck without lights came bearing down on him. There was no way of avoiding him. The impact threw him into the air and moments later he lay dead on the pavement.

In church, the priest was raising the host: "This is my body... This is my blood..."

It is not by chance that as I write about Joao, Mozart's Requiem keeps coming back to my mind. It was the masterpiece which was never completed because of Mozart's death. As we know, one of his disciples finished the work, following Mozart's notes and his conversations with him. We can also think of Joao's life as an unfinished musical score. In fact, in a life such as his (not even 23 years long) only a few of the notes had been played, even though we can imagine how the score might have developed. Some might say that he only accomplished half of it, but those who knew him don't have this impression at all. Unknowingly, relatives and friends, interpreting those few notes, completed the piece; permitting, with the donation of his organs, that total gift of self that Joao had already begun with his life. As in the field of music, no works are more complete than certain seemingly "unfinished" ones. □

1) See inside back cover; 2) Founder of the Focolare Movement.

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

FOCOLARE means "hearth," "family fireside." What first strikes people when they come in contact with members of the Focolare, whether in small groups or in large gatherings, is the atmosphere of a family. It is a family formed by many different people in various walks of life. The Focolare Movement is also known as the "Work of Mary." Under this name it was approved by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 in Italy. In the midst of the terrible destruction of World War II, Chiara Lubich realized that God is the only one worth living for. As a result, she began to center her life on the Gospel, together with a small group of young women who followed her. Their ideal became one of striving toward the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer to the Father: "May they all be one" (Jn.17:21).

The life of Chiara and her first companions, and the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to the unique form of spirituality of the Focolare Movement, a spirituality of unity. It has proved to be a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life, of going to God together.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. They work as other laymen and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini" and form the backbone of a vast Movement within the Movement, called the New Family Movement.

THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE

NEW HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Volunteers, also called the "Volunteers of God," are a large group within the Focolare Movement; they would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. The Volunteers are the backbone of the mass movement called New Humanity. The aim of this Movement is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation. The Gen have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love and to sharing with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

THE MOVEMENT AMONG THE RELIGIOUS

Men and women religious — although they live according to their own rules and constitutions and are already a distinct part of the Church through their religious families — can also be associated with the Focolare.

Contact with the Movement helps them to focus their attention on the specific charism of their founders, and to see how it can be lived in the present time.

PRIESTS — PRIESTS' MOVEMENT — SEMINARIANS — PARISH MOVEMENT

Many diocesan priests are committed to living the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Some of them live in community. They form the backbone of the Priests' Movement which is made up of priests who live the spirituality of unity.

FOCOLARE FAMILY

The largest group within the Focolare Movement is made up of men, women and young people who are connected with the Movement without having any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their acceptance of its spirit and their desire to live it.

ECUMENISM

The Movement not only crossed the political boundaries of more than 100 countries, it has also gone beyond the barriers erected for centuries between the various Christian Churches.

Ecumenical activities take place in the different parts of the world where the Movement exists.

In the past few years a promising, ongoing dialogue has been established with faithful of other religions.

SUMMER MARIAPOLIS

Summer meetings are held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according to the Gospel.

PERMANENT MARIAPOLIS

The need to prolong the experience of the summer meetings brought about the birth of small cities called Permanent Mariapolis. They are made up of young men and women, as well as whole families, who are there for a designated period of time to be formed according to the Gospel spirit of unity.

They also attend classes in Sacred Scripture, Theology and Sociology and work for their own support.

MARIAPOLIS CENTERS

In addition to the Permanent Mariapolis, there are Mariapolis Centers, which are training centers for the members of the Movement.

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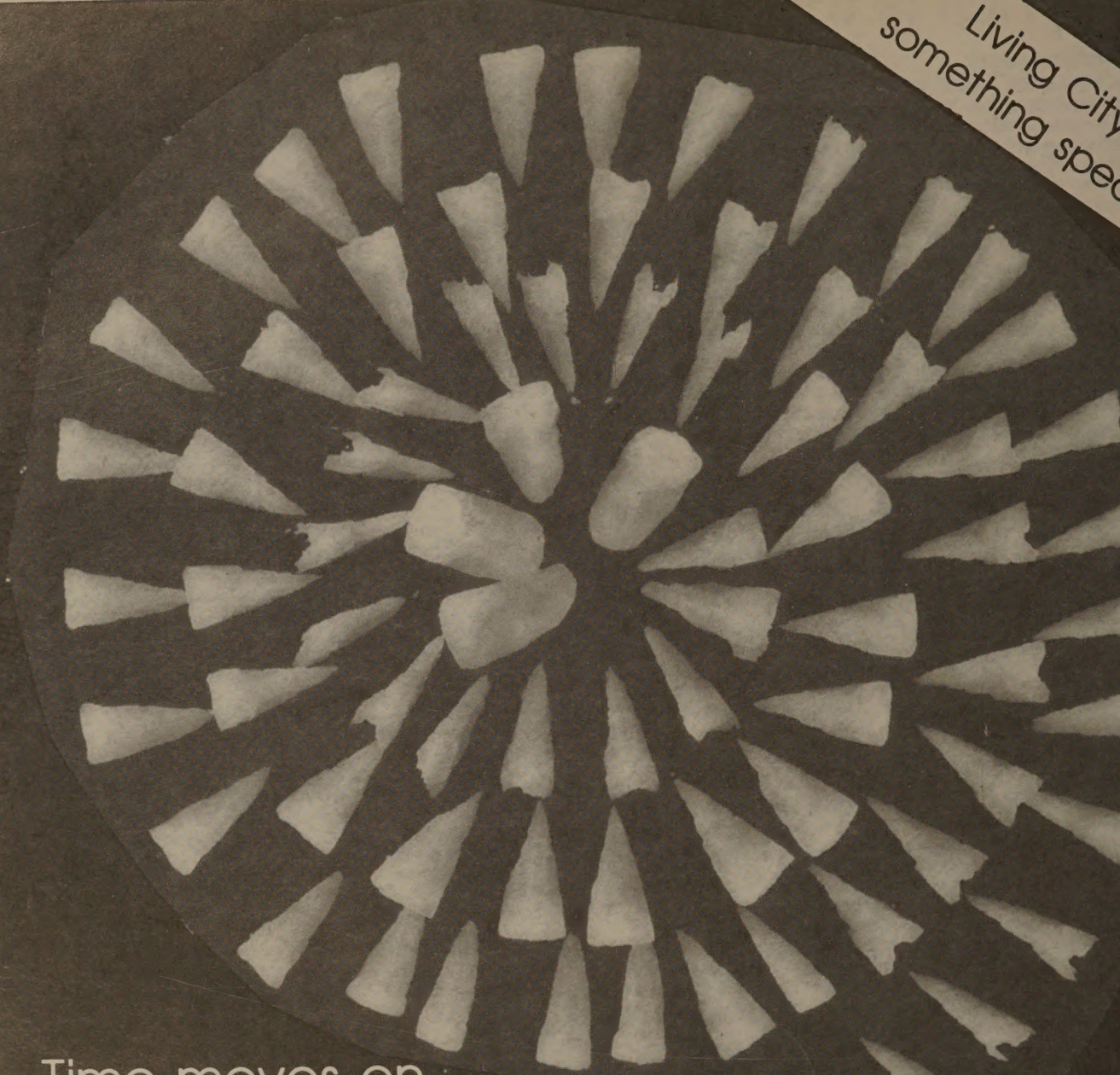
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